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50 Most Influential Christians In America

By The Insider



The Church Report is pleased once again to announce this year's list of The 50 Most Influential Christians in America. The list is the result of over 200,000 nominations from readers of the magazine and our online readers. After carefully tabulating each nomination, what follows is a list of people deserving of our recognition and thanks. As with all types of lists, there are those not on this list, not because they were not deserving, but simply because we could not publish a list of the 100 most influential Christians in America. The staff of The Church Report did not choose this list, as we do some of our other lists throughout the year; rather, we feel that the nominations from Christians across America are more representative.

This year's most influential Christian in America, as chosen by the readers, is Pastor Joel Osteen of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. Pastor Osteen - who early in his church life never thought about being a pastor and preferred being in the background - pastors one of the largest churches in America, is a best-selling author and travels across the country speaking to packed arenas of people eager to hear his message.

Always humble, Pastor Osteen gives credit to his wife, his staff and his church family for his success and the many blessings of Lakewood Church. Pastor Osteen has a gift for reaching unchurched people with his message of positive thought and God's plan for our lives.

The Church Report congratulates Pastor Joel Osteen and all of the nominees for the Most Influential Christians in America!

2. BILLY GRAHAM

BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION
Charlotte, N.C.

Evangelist Billy Graham has preached the Gospel to more people in live audiences than anyone else in history - over 210 million people in more than 185 countries and territories. He has reached hundreds of millions more through television, video, film and Webcasts. Graham founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) in 1950, which was headquartered in Minneapolis, Minn., until relocating to Charlotte, N.C. in 2003.

3. BILL HYBELS

WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH
South Barrington, Ill.

Bill Hybels is the founding and senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill. Willow Creek's innovative ministries have made it one of the most-attended churches in North America. Hybels is also an author of several Christian books, especially on the subject of Christian leadership. His charismatic personality and sincere style have made Hybels one of the most popular faces of the modern evangelical movement.

4. BISHOP T.D. JAKES

THE POTTER'S HOUSE
Dallas, Texas

Bishop T.D. Jakes is the CEO of The Potter's House, a nonprofit organization that has produced four major national conferences - *The Pastors' and Leadership Conference*, *ManPower*, *Woman, Thou Art Loosed (WTAL)*, and *MegaFest*. The outreach efforts of Bishop Jakes and The Potter's House don't tarry at the doors of the church, or even on the shores of the nation.

5. JAMES C. DOBSON, PH.D.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY
Colorado Springs, Colo.

James C. Dobson, Ph.D., bestselling author and recognized advocate for the family, is founder and chairman of Focus on the Family, a nonprofit organization that produces his internationally syndicated radio programs that

are heard in 25 languages on over 8,300 radio facilities in 164 countries.

6. PAUL CROUCH

TRINITY BROADCASTING NETWORK

Santa Ana, Calif.

Paul Crouch is an internationally recognized visionary in the field of Christian television. In 1973, along with his wife, Jan, he founded the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Under his leadership, TBN has grown to become the largest group owner of broadcast stations in the world. Crouch has received numerous television broadcasting awards, including the Telly Award, the Golden Halo Award and numerous Silver Angel awards.

7. JOYCE MEYER

JOYCE MEYER MINISTRIES

Fenton, Mo.

Joyce Meyer is one of the world's leading practical Bible teachers. Through her ministry, Meyer has taught on hundreds of subjects, authored over 70 books and conducts close to 20 conferences per year around the world. Her television and radio program is broadcast to most of the globe. In February 2005, she was selected by Time Magazine as one of the top 25 evangelical leaders in America.

8. LEONARD SWEET

DREW THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

Madison, N.J.

Currently the E. Stanley Jones professor of evangelism at Drew Theological School (Madison, N.J.), and visiting distinguished professor at George Fox University, (Portland, Oregon), Leonard Sweet is the author of more than 100 articles, 600 published sermons and 27 books. Founder and president of SpiritVenture Ministries, Sweet is a frequent speaker at conferences in the United States and around the globe.

9. JOHN PIPER

BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH

Minneapolis, Minn.

John Piper is the pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minn. Piper is the author of more than 20 books and his preaching and teaching is featured on the daily radio program "Desiring God." He and his wife Noël have four sons, one daughter and four grandchildren.

10. ROB BELL

MARS HILL BIBLE CHURCH

Grandville, Mich.

Rob Bell is the founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church, located in Grandville, Mich. He is featured in the first series of spiritual short films called NOOMA and recently completed his first book "Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith." Bell and his wife, Kristen, have two boys and live in Grand Rapids, Mich.

11. GEORGE W. BUSH

PRESIDENT

Washington, D.C.

George W. Bush is the 43rd President of the United States. He was sworn into office Jan. 20, 2001; re-elected Nov. 2, 2004; and sworn in for a second term Jan. 20, 2005. Prior to his Presidency, President Bush served for six years as the 46th governor of Texas, where he earned a reputation for bipartisanship and as a compassionate conservative.

12. ERWIN MCMANUS

MOSAIC

Los Angeles, Calif.

McManus serves as cultural architect of Mosaic in Los Angeles, Calif, which has emerged as a spiritual reference point for the future church. As founder of Global Impact, McManus is recognized as a national and international speaker engaging such issues as globalization, leadership, cultural transformation, post-modernism and church growth. He partners with Bethel Seminary as a distinguished lecturer and futurist and is also a contributing editor for Leadership Journal.

13. DR. ROBERT H. SCHULLER

CRYSTAL CATHEDRAL

Garden Grove, Calif.

Longtime pastor and bestselling author Dr. Robert H. Schuller is perhaps best known as minister of the famed Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif.; and host of the televised "Hour of Power." Dr. Schuller is the author of

more than 30 books, including five that have appeared on The New York Times bestseller list. Dr. Schuller has received numerous awards including the Horatio Alger Award and Clergyman of the Year.

14. William Franklin Graham III

SAMARITAN'S PURSE

Boone, N.C.

William Franklin Graham, III, is the son of evangelist Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth Bell Graham. He is president and CEO of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organization providing relief and assistance in more than 100 countries. He conducts festivals around the world as an evangelist for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). He was appointed CEO of the organization in 2000 and president of BGEA in 2001.

15. LUIS PALAU

THE PALAU ASSOCIATION

Portland, Oregon

Luis Palau has shared the Good News face-to-face with tens of millions. He has authored close to 50 books, and his radio broadcasts are broadcast internationally. His "Great music! Good News!" festivals have drawn record crowds. The Palau Association also includes the Next Generation Alliance, which nurtures and supports evangelists around the world; and PalauFest Productions, which creates outreach films and tools for young people and youth ministries.

16. DR. RICK WARREN

SADDLEBACK CHURCH

Lake Forest, Calif.

Dr. Rick Warren is the author of the New York Times #1 bestseller "The Purpose-Driven Life." The book has sold over 19 million copies since October 2002, making it the bestselling hardback nonfiction book in history, which is said to have ignited a spiritual movement in countless communities around the world. Warren is also the founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., one of America's largest and best-known churches.

17. CHUCK COLSON

PRISON FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

Lansdowne, Va.

Imprisoned during the Watergate scandal, Chuck Colson is founder and head of Prison Fellowship Ministries in Lansdowne, Va., the world's largest outreach to prisoners, ex-prisoners, crime victims and their families. Colson is also an author and host of "BreakPoint," a syndicated national radio show.



18. PAUL CROUCH JR.

TRINITY BROADCASTING NETWORK

Santa Ana, Calif.

Paul Crouch Jr. is vice president of administration for Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), America's mostwatched faith channel and the world's largest religious television network. TBN reaches every major continent via 46 satellites and over 12,000 television and cable affiliates worldwide. Crouch has received numerous awards including the Telly Award, the Golden Halo Award and numerous Silver Angel awards.

19. PAULA WHITE

PAULA WHITE MINISTRIES

Tampa, Fla.

Through the power of media, Paula White, supervising producer and host of "Paula White Today," has ministered, enlightened and uplifted millions of viewers around the world. White's life was forever changed when at the age of 18 she first heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Heralded as the "midwife to dreams," White inspires people to step boldly into the divine destiny that God has planned for them.

20. ANDY STANLEY

NORTH POINT MINISTRIES

Multiple Locations, Georgia

Andy Stanley is the founder of North Point Ministries and senior pastor of North Point Community Church, Buckhead Church and Browns Bridge Community Church. Each Sunday, over 15,000 adults attend worship services at one of these NPM campuses. Stanley is the author of multiple books. He is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary.

21. JONI EARECKSON TADA

JONI AND FRIENDS**Agoura Hills, Calif.**

Joni Eareckson Tada founded Joni and Friends, an organization accelerating Christian ministry in the disability community, in 1979, after a diving accident left her a quadriplegic in a wheelchair. Joni and Friends communicates the gospel and equips Christ-honoring churches worldwide to evangelize and disciple people affected by disability. She served on the National Council on Disability for three-and-a-half years, during which time the Americans with Disabilities Act became law.

22. BISHOP HARRY R. JACKSON JR.**HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH****College Park, Md.**

Bishop Harry R. Jackson Jr. is chairman of the High Impact Leadership Coalition, a nonprofit organization leading the charge to educate the nation regarding the importance of biblical and moral value issues for all. He is also senior pastor of Hope Christian Church in College Park, Md., a suburb of our nation's capital. He has a vital teaching ministry via radio and television both in the United States and abroad.

23. DR. R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.**THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY****Louisville, Ky.**

Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr. is the president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of the largest seminaries in the world and the flagship school of the Southern Baptist Convention. He hosts a daily radio program and writes commentary on moral, cultural and theological issues. Dr. Mohler is also Editor-in-Chief of the Southern Baptist Journal of Theology.

24. ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ**ANGEL MINISTRIES****Raleigh, N.C.**

Anne Graham Lotz, founder of AnGeL Ministries, has proclaimed God's Word to people around the world for over 28 years. The daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Billy Graham, Lotz launched Just Give Me Jesus, a series of life-changing revivals throughout the world, in the year 2000. Lotz is an award winning and best selling author of seven books and multiple Bible studies.

**25. JAY ALAN SEKULOW****AMERICAN CENTER FOR LAW AND JUSTICE****Washington, D.C.**

Jay Alan Sekulow is chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), a law firm and educational organization that specializes in constitutional law. He is also chief counsel of the European Center for Law and Justice (ECLJ). An accomplished and respected judicial advocate, Sekulow has presented oral argument before the U.S. Supreme Court in numerous cases in defense of constitutional freedoms.

26. ED YOUNG JR.**FELLOWSHIP CHURCH****Dallas, Texas**

Ed Young Jr. is the founding and senior pastor of Fellowship Church (www.fellowshipchurch.com), which has its main campus just north of the DFW Airport and operates three satellite campuses in the greater Dallas/Fort Worth area. He also hosts Ed Young Ministries (www.edyoung.org), a weekly national television program and weekday radio broadcast.

27. CHUCK SWINDOLL**INSIGHT FOR LIVING****Plano, Texas**

Insight for Living's Bible teacher, Chuck Swindoll, currently leads Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas; but his listening audience extends far beyond a local church body. As a leading program in Christian broadcasting, "Insight for Living" airs in major Christian and non-Christian radio markets and is broadcast via the Web. He is also chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary.

28. DR. JACK W. HAYFORD**THE KING'S COLLEGE AND SEMINARY****Van Nuys, Calif.**

Dr. Jack W. Hayford is the chancellor of The King's College and Seminary. He is also the founding pastor of The Church On The Way (TCOTW), the First Foursquare Church of Van Nuys, Calif., which began as a "temporary" assignment to shepherd 18 people and continued fruitfully as the congregation surpassed 10,000. A scholar and teacher, Dr. Hayford mentors other leaders and is recognized as a "pastor to pastors."

29. TOMMY BARNETT

PHOENIX FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Phoenix, Ariz.

Tommy Barnett is the senior pastor of Phoenix First Assembly of God in Phoenix, Ariz., one of the fastest-growing churches in America; and the founding pastor of the Los Angeles Dream Center. Barnett is widely seen on the Trinity Broadcasting Network program, "Praise the Lord" and has appeared on "The 700 Club." He produces a weekly documentary program with his son from the L.A. Dream Center, aired on TBN.

30. MARCUS LAMB

DAYSTAR

Dallas, Texas

In 1997, Marcus began the Daystar Television Network, which owns and operates TV stations across the nation. Daystar is now the second largest Christian Television Network in the world. Marcus and his wife, Joni, host a daily TV program called "Celebration" that is broadcast live via satellite across the nation and around the world. They minister at various churches around the nation.

31. DR. RICHARD LAND

THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Dr. Richard Land is the president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. He hosts For Faith and Family and For Faith and Family's Insight and Richard Land Live! radio programs. Dr. Land is also the executive editor of Faith & Family Values.

32. DR. CHARLES F. STANLEY

IN TOUCH MINISTRIES

Atlanta, Ga.

Dr. Charles F. Stanley is senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Atlanta and founder of In Touch Ministries. The "In Touch" program can be heard in every nation via radio, shortwave or television broadcasts. In 1988, Dr. Stanley was inducted into the National Religious Broadcaster's (NRB) Hall of Fame. Dr. Stanley has also served two terms as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

33. MAX LUCADO

UPWORDS

San Antonio, Texas

Max Lucado came to Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas, after years of church planting in Brazil. In addition to his role as senior minister at Oak Hills, Lucado is now one of the most-recognized inspirational authors in the United States, second only to Billy Graham. Lucado's books are regular fixtures on national bestseller lists including The New York Times, USA Today, Publishers Weekly and the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA).

34. BISHOP EDDIE L. LONG

NEW BIRTH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Lithonia, Ga.

Bishop Eddie L. Long is God's visionary for New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, which has grown from 300 in 1987 to 25,000 today. Through community-empowering projects, Bishop Long continues to equip people in economics, leadership and business. Bishop Long has close relationships with key leaders in the religious, political and entertainment arenas; consequently, he is advancing the Kingdom of God in a whole new way.

35. JOHN C. MAXWELL

INJOY

Atlanta, Ga.

John C. Maxwell is the founder of EQUIP, a nonprofit training over a million Christian leaders worldwide; and INJOY Stewardship Services, which is helping churches raise billions of dollars. As chairman of Global Pastor's Network, Maxwell speaks to hundreds of thousands of people each year and has sold over 9 million books.

36. DR. JOHN C. HAGEE

CORNERSTONE CHURCH

San Antonio, Texas

Dr. John C. Hagee is the founder and senior pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, a nondenominational evangelical church with more than 18,000 active members. Hagee is the president and CEO of Global Evangelism Television, which telecasts his radio and television ministry. Hagee has received numerous honors and accolades from national Jewish organizations for his unwavering support of Israel.

37. DR. JAMES KENNEDY, PH.D.

CORAL RIDGE MINISTRIES

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Dr. James Kennedy, Ph.D., is senior minister of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and president of Coral Ridge Ministries. The author of more than 65 books, he is also founder and president of Evangelism Explosion and chancellor of Knox Theological Seminary. Dr. Kennedy is the most-listened-to Presbyterian minister in the world today.

38. DR. GEORGE BARNA

THE BARNA GROUP

Ventura, Calif.

Dr. George Barna is an author, pastor and the founder of The Barna Group in Ventura, Calif., a firm specializing in conducting research for Christian ministries and nonprofits. The Barna Research division has conducted research for various denominations and numerous parachurch organizations including the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, World Vision, American Bible Society, Campus Crusade for Christ and Trinity Broadcasting Network.

39. ROD PARSLEY

WORLD HARVEST CHURCH

Columbus, Ohio

Rod Parsley is pastor of World Harvest Church in Columbus, Ohio, a megachurch with more than 12,000 in attendance weekly. He is also a highly sought-after crusade and conference speaker. Parsley hosts "Breakthrough," a daily and weekly television broadcast seen by millions across America and around the world. He also oversees World Harvest Academy, World Harvest Bible College and Bridge of Hope Missions and Outreach.

40. JERRY FALWELL

JERRY FALWELL MINISTRIES

Lynchburg, Va.

Jerry Falwell is the founder of Jerry Falwell Ministries. He also founded the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va. He also founded the Moral Majority movement in 1979, Liberty University in 1971, the Elam Home for alcohol and drug dependent men, and the Liberty Godparent Home, a ministry to women and girls dealing with crisis pregnancies.

41. SAM BROWNBACK

SENATOR

Kansas

Sam Brownback is a U.S. Senator from Kansas. He is currently focused on defending and promoting traditional marriage, building market- and consumer-based solutions to health care reform, and meaningful tax reform including an optional flat tax. He has worked hard to ensure that we confirm judges who will interpret the law and not legislate from the bench.

42. JOHN MACARTHUR

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sun Valley, Calif.

John MacArthur has served as pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California since 1969. His pulpit ministry has been extended around the globe through his media ministry, Grace to You, and its satellite offices in Australia, Canada, Europe, India, New Zealand, Singapore, and South Africa. He also serves as the president of The Master's College and The Master's Seminary.

43. DR. JOHN VAUGHAN

CHURCH GROWTH TODAY

Bolivar, Mo.

Dr. John Vaughan is the founding editor and past president of the American Society for Church Growth. In 1980, he founded Church Growth Today, a research consulting office specializing in U.S. and global rapid-growth churches and megachurches (2,000-plus attendance). For 25 years, he has served as a consultant and information resource for the nation's largest and fastest-growing churches, as well as smaller churches, denominations and parachurch organizations.

44. BETH MOORE

LIVING PROOF MINISTRIES

Houston, Texas

Beth Moore founded Living Proof Ministries in 1994 to teach women how to live on God's Word. Her books and Bible studies have been read by women of all ages, races and denominations. She conducts Living Proof Live conferences and a radio ministry, "Living Proof with Beth Moore."

45. MICHAEL SLAUGHTER

GINGHAMSBURG CHURCH

Tipp City, Ohio

Michael Slaughter is Lead Pastor at Ginghamburg Church in Tipp City, Ohio. Throughout the last decade, Ginghamburg's early innovation to incorporate multisensory worship, tell God-stories through multimedia, and attract a multicultural community through a diverse music style has filled this little country church with over 4,000 people.

46. Phil Vischer

VEGGIETALES

Phil Vischer is a writer, actor, animator, puppeteer, and the founder of Big Idea Productions, the company best known for bringing computer-animated vegetables to life in the popular *VeggieTales* series. Since leaving Big Idea, Vischer has started a new creative shop called Jellyfish where he and a small team work to produce faith-based media for children and families. He still works with Big Idea on a contract basis, writing scripts and performing many of the voices for new VeggieTales productions.

47. DR. FRANK PAGE

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Dr. Frank Page is the president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors in Taylors, S.C. He holds a Ph.D. in the field of Christian Ethics with a focus on moral, social and ethical issues. Dr. Page is a frequent speaker at events nationally and internationally.

48. DR. CREFLO A. DOLLAR

WORLD CHANGERS INTERNATIONAL

College Park, Ga.

Dr. Creflo A. Dollar is the founder of World Changers Ministries (WCM), a global organization. His goal is to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people of every color and culture, changing the world one person at a time. The award-winning "Changing Your World" television broadcast, which began in 1990, now reaches an audience of almost 1 billion people daily around the world.

49. CARDINAL THEODORE MCCARRICK, PH.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF WASHINGTON

Washington, D.C.

In April 2005, Cardinal McCarrick was one of 115 cardinals in the world who participated in the conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI as the successor to Pope John Paul II. He is a founding member of the Papal Foundation and has served as its president since 1997. He is chancellor of The Catholic University of America. For the Vatican, he serves on several Pontifical Councils and Pontifical Commissions.

50. FRANK SOMMERVILLE

WEYCER, KAPLAN, PULASKI & ZUBER, P.C.

Dallas, Texas

Frank Somerville is a shareholder in the law firm of Weycer, Kaplan, Pulaski & Zuber, P.C. in Dallas, Texas. He has served nonprofit organizations as an accountant, auditor, tax adviser and legal adviser. His experience includes representing clergy, churches and nonprofit organizations at all levels of IRS tax controversy (from examination to courtroom) across America. He is one of the few nonprofit attorneys who actively litigates nonprofit cases in the courtroom.



